4324 cc. 42.

BAPTISM,

A

DIVINE COMMAND,

AS SUCH

Obligatory on every penitent believer, who would visibly profess the CHRISTIAN RELIGION, And by this required act of Submission, externally commence followers of JESUS CHRIST.

ADDRESSED TO PROTESTANTS.

By B. DOBEL.

If ye love me, keep my Commandments;
He that hath my Commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me.

JESUS CHRIST.

Speaking the Truth in love.

PAUL.

Cranbrook: Printed by S. Waters.
1791.

BAPTISM,

A DIVINE COMMAND, &c.

AS rational accountable Beings you are appealed to, whether profeſſing the Chriſtian Religion, or the obeying its rites and precepts, be not a perſonal concern, that which muſt be performed or ſubmited to individually, that which none can do, or ſubmit to for us, even were we voluntarily to nominate, or appoint a ſubſtitute to act as proxy in our ſtead?

How then is it poſſible that any part of mankind ſhould be diſcharged from perſonal obligation unknown to them, at a period when they are naturally incapable of giving aſſent, or manifeſting rational moral approbation to any thing done, reſpecting them?

IF you really believe, that you muſt be accountable to God for neglecting to obey His commands by JESUS CHRIST, do you not ſee that it is a circumſtance of great importance that you obey them? 2 Theſſ. i. 8.

AND then, "although the law given from God by *Moſes* as touching ceremonies and rites, do not bind Chriſtian men*," yet that the New Teſtament is the ſacred rule and directory, reſpecting the rites of the Chriſtian Diſpenſation, Proteſtant Chriſtian profeſſors will readily admit.

* Article vii. of the Church of England.

And that Baptism is a divine Command and a Rite of the present dispensation, Matt. xxviii. 19. with Mark xvi. 16. will also be deemed as sufficient proof; but if any thing farther be thought necessary, see how the Apostles of Jesus Christ executed their Lord and Master's commission. Acts ii. 38—41. also viii. 12. xviii. 8. and Rom. vi. 3.—5.

To obey a divine command, is, to submit to, or perform the duty commanded, influenced by a *sense* of obligation; hence when it is said, Mark xvi. 16. ——is baptized. —— and Acts ii. 38.——be baptized every one of you, we are taught that as an act of obedience they were to submit to this Rite; and Ver. 41. we are informed they thus did.

And that repentance and faith is required of persons to be baptized, is undeniably evident; Acts ii. 38. and viii. 37. "Repentance, whereby they forsake Sin; and Faith, whereby they steadfastly believe the promises of God made to them in that Sacrament*."

And that every penitent believer is under obligation to obey this command, is also evident.

1. Because it is the revealed Will of God; Acts ii. 38. compared with Mark xvi. 16.

2. Have any authority to repeal, or annul the sacred order of the Gospel; to baptize subjects who do not profess to be penitent, nor believe; or such as are naturally incapable of it? If none have such authority, doth it not follow that every penitent, who wisheth to enjoy what is graciously promised to such as believe and obey, should *once* obey this Rite?

Art

* Church of England's Catechism.

ART thou, reader! a penitent believer in CHRIST, and one who hath *not obeyed* Him in this point? then why tarrieth thou, arise and be baptized?

3. WHAT was the Gospel to be preached to every creature, capable of knowing their duty, but for the *obedience* of Faith?

4. IF it be a duty obligatory on one penitent believer, is it not so on all such?

IF it is the duty of all capable of hearing the Gospel with understanding, to be penitent believers, is it not as certain, that all such should, as an act of obedience, be baptized?

BUT such as are incapable either of knowing or believing, how is it possible they should obey? — "Why then are Infants baptized, when by reason of their tender age they cannot perform them" viz. repentance and faith*?

IF then Infants cannot perform or obey, and obedience is that which Adults only are capable of, doth it not hence evidently appear, that if Infants cannot obey while in a state of nonage to reason, and do not when adult, that then *this command* is not obeyed by them at all?

AND that any thing done to, or with them, should supercede, or set aside their obligation to obey this divine Command, (or personal submission to Baptism) when of age capable of it, or be considered by the Christian Legislator, as equivolent with their obeying; is not this an unrevealed mystery?

AND unless it were revealed, that the injunction *to be*

* Church of England's Catechism.

be baptized, need not be obeyed, how can any ceremony performed with Infants, (whatever it be called*) excuſe them from *once* obeying this command of JESUS CHRIST, if they live to a capacity of it?

IT was the command of God, that the male Infants of Jews, or of thoſe that joined them as a nation, or diſtinct People, ſhould be circumciſed, or have that abiding mark or ſign fixed on them as a token of the Covenant, made with *Abraham* their believing root, that God would be their God, and they ſhould be His people, on condition of their obeying Him as ſuch in their generations. Gen. xvii.

BUT what is this to the Baptiſm which JESUS CHRIST enjoined on penitent believing Males and Females, in order to their becoming Members of His viſible Church, and which, (whatever it may be to Adults, acting from knowledge, and in faith) affixeth no mark, ſign nor ſeal, on Infants, who are incapable of moral knowledge or action?

WHAT then availeth Baptiſm during this period, or until the ſubjects are capable of a rational, voluntary entering on the Chriſtian Profeſſion?

AS Baptiſm is a command of JESUS CHRIST, is it not the duty of all who know and believe it to be ſo, as ſuch to obey it?

WHY ſhould a yoke be put on the neck of Infants, precluding, or preventing them when capable, from chuſing to obey their Maker in this point of His revealed Will by JESUS CHRIST?

WHEN

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* Whether chriſtening—ſealing—purification—dedication, accompanied with vowing, &c.

WHEN will force or compulsion, relative to Baptism, cease to be employed under the present dispensation, or law of Liberty, Jam. ii. 12. and the rising generations be permitted and encouraged in a scriptural, rational way, to comply with their Redeemer's invitation to take His yoke upon them, evidencing their faith in being baptized in His Name, as a *willing voluntary* act of their obedience to Him.

SOME conclude that Infants have a claim, a right to Baptism, because the male Infants of the Jews, and of those who joined them, were circumcised. Also because the baptizing of male and female Infants (especially of Believers) is not forbidden.——Not forbidden! doth any serious Christian really think that this, or that, may be done, nay ought to be done, and as a Christian Rite too, on this footing, because not forbidden?

DO Protestants, when arguing with the Papist, admit of this from them, as a valid plea?——One would rather think that to a protestant Christian, the constituting and enjoining a divine Rite requires a command from the Christian Legislator, respecting the duty, and the subjects who are to obey it; and would not esteem the *not* being forbidden, a sufficient ground, or any ground, authorizing the performing a ceremony, as a divine Rite.—For may it not be said, who hath required this at your hand to tread my Courts? Isa. i. 12.

IF subjects are commanded to submit to a Rite, requiring that repentance and faith should precede the act of submission, doth not this virtually forbid, or prohibit, the acting in a different or contrary way; if not, what should prevent, but that the whole train of popish trumpery, might be right and fit on the same bottom, for the same reason, the not being expressly forbidden.

AS

As to Infant's claim to baptiſm, becauſe the ſeed of believers, &c.—What doth the Preparer of the way of the Lord ſay, reſpecting claim, becauſe the natural deſcendants of a believer under the new, or Goſpel diſpenſation?——Think not to ſay within yourſelves, we have *Abraham* to our Father:——And now alſo the axe is laid to the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit, is hewn down and caſt into the fire. Matt. iii. 9, 10. as if he had ſaid, think not to hinge on the plea of your being the ſeed of that famous Believer, by *carnal deſcent*, for this will not avail you.——And if this plea of the Jews, *in the days* of John the Baptiſt, and of our SAVIOUR, and his Apoſtles, founded on their being the natural deſcendants of *Abraham* would not avail that people, how came it to paſs *ſince* that time, if any man profeſſeth to believe in CHRIST, that his Infants, while ſuch, by virtue of his faith, are entiled to religious privileges, and hence have a claim to Baptiſm?——The Baptiſt ſaid, Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, is hewn down, &c. every accountable individual muſt *perſonally* obey from the heart the divine Commands: and thus bring forth the good fruit of faith, as every one is to give an account of himſelf to God.—Be not deceived.——God is not mocked. Gal. vi. 7.

IT is ſincerly wiſhed, in love and charity deſired, that with a view to the Glory of God, the honour of the Redeemer's Kingdom, the importance of being intereſted in it, and the anſwer of a good conſcience toward God, that you would aſk yourſelves, how you have *obeyed*, reſpecting the Baptiſm which the Lord and Head of Chriſtians hath enjoined on all, who would commence his followers; and which therefore you will grant, ought *once* to be *obeyed* by you.

To

To obey is better than Sacrifice. 1 Sam. xv. 22.

Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say? Luke vi. 46.

The foregoing obſervations may be thus ſumed up.

1. That Baptiſm is a divine Command.

2. As ſuch, it ought to be obeyed.

3. That, in order to obey, the ſubject muſt know the duty, and believe in Him who commanded it.

4 That to be baptized is a Duty obligatory on every penitent Believer in Christ, *once* to be ſubmited to.

Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, ſays the Redeemer, and ye ſhall find reſt to your Souls, for my yoke is eaſy, and my burden is light. Matt. xi. 29, 30.

Hath it not been often ſaid of the Baptiſts, that an undue ſtreſs is laid by them on baptiſm,—That they deem it as the chief thing.—Make it a Saviour, &c.

But when thoſe who deem Infants ſubjects of Baptiſm, are diſpoſed thus unjuſtly to aſperſe, or reproach the Baptiſts for their adhering to the Baptiſm enjoined by Jesus Christ, and practiſed by his Apoſtles; ought they not to be reminded of the *greater* ſtreſs they themſelves lay on what they do even to Infants, and of the greater things attributed thereto by them, than what the Baptiſts do to the baptizing of adult Believers?—For inſtance,

Doth not the Church of England hold that by Bap-

tiſm, even an Infant is made a member of CHRIST, a child of GOD, and an inheriter of the kingdom of heaven?

AND is not regeneration, deliverance from Sin, and a partaking of the death of CHRIST aſcribed to it?

AND what do the Preſbyterians, and other Pedobaptiſts ſay of baptiſm, and when Infants are the ſubjects of it?

THAT it is to them a ſeal of the covenant of Grace, ——of engrafting into CHRIST, and of union with Him,——of remiſſion of ſins,——regeneration, adoption and eternal life.——That water in Baptiſm repreſenteth and ſignifieth both the Blood of CHRIST, which taketh away all guilt of ſin, original and actual, and the ſanctifying virtue of the Spirit of CHRIST againſt the dominion of ſin, &c.*

WHAT wonderful effects are aſcribed to Baptiſm by Mr. *M. Henry*, in his treatiſe lately publiſhed!

"SUCH are the privileges which attend the ordinance, "that if our Maſter had bid us do ſome great thing "would we not have done it, rather than come ſhort of "them? much more, when he only ſaith unto us, *waſh* "*and be clean;* waſh and be CHRISTIANS—The "Goſpel contains not only a doctrine, but a cove- "nant, and by Baptiſm we are brought into that cove- "nant—Baptiſm wreſts the keys of the heart out of the "hands of the ſtrong man armed. that the poſſeſſion "may be ſurrendered to him, whoſe right it is——

"THE water of Baptiſm is DESIGNED for our "cleanſing

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* Aſſembly's Directory.

"cleanſing from the ſpots and defilements of the fleſh—
"In baptiſm our names are engraved upon the breaſt-
"plate of this great High Prieſt—This then is the effi-
"cacy of Baptiſm; it is putting the child's name into
"the goſpel Grant—we are baptized into CHRIST's
"death; i. e. God doth in that ordinance ſeal, con-
"firm, and make over to us, ALL the benefits of the
"death of CHRIST.—Infant Baptiſm ſpeaks an hered-
"ary relation to God, that comes to us by deſcent——

"BAPTISM ſeals the promiſe of God's being to ME
"a God, and that is greatly encouraging; but *Infant*
"Baptiſm increaſes the encouragement as it aſſures me
"of God being the God of my fathers, and the God
"of my infancy*."

AND what did Mr. *J. Weſtley* mean when he ſays,
"If Infants are guilty of orignal ſin in the ordinary way,
they cannot be ſaved, unleſs this be waſhed away by
Baptiſm †?"

THE Baptiſts do not entertain ſuch high conceptions reſpecting Baptiſm, as is thus ſuggeſted by Pedobaptiſts.

THEY do not believe that it waſheth away original ſin; nor that the uſe of water and the ſacred names, can make an Infant any more a member of CHRIST, a child of God, or an inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven, than it was before the performing ſuch ceremony; nor do they believe it brings Infants into the covenant of Grace, [which implyeth that unleſs they are baptiz-

* Mr. *Henry's* treatiſe on Baptiſm, p. 12, 40, 42, 43, 59, 130, 170, 193, & 201. as quoted by Mr. *Booth's* Pedobaptiſm, &c. and vol. ii. p. 144, 145.

† Preſervative, p. 160.

ed they are excluded]——nor that it is a ſeal of the covenant of Grace, nor the other wonderful things Mr. *Henry* ſpeaks of, as being done by Baptiſm for Infants.

THEREFORE muſt not the candid impartial mind conclude, that Pedobaptiſts, rather than the Baptiſts, need the being warned againſt making an idol of Baptiſm, and the putting it in the place of CHRIST.

YET notwithſtanding, as Baptiſm is a divine Command, the Baptiſts would reverently regard it, and as ſuch, eſteem it their duty religiouſly to *obey* the command, in an humble ſincere act of ſubmiſſion to the divine Will; and that for ſuch reaſons as theſe:

1. BECAUSE it is commanded.

2. TO conclude Baptiſm to be an indifferent thing, is to degrade the Author of it; if Baptiſm, which he ſubmitted to himſelf, and enjoined on thoſe who would follow Him, be a *triſle*,——then the commander is a *trifler*; and ſhall we thus ſlight the REDEEMER *?

3. BAPTISM is a part of Righteouſneſs, Matt. iii. 15. it cannot then be neglected without guilt. Matt. vi. 19.

4. IT is the duty of believers to be baptized, elſe how do they act conſiſtent with their profeſſion?—— Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things that I ſay. Luke vi. 14.

5. BAPTISM is enjoined by the ſame authority by which other duties are enjoined, therefore, *in this reſpect* of

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* No. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7. are partly tranſcribed from Mr. *Taylor's* Compenduous view of Baptiſm, p. 21, 22, 23.

of equal importance with all other duties.

6. BAPTISM is the anſwer of a good conſcience, 1 Pet. iii. 21. we cannot pretend to be Chriſtians without a good conſcience; nor to have in ourſelves, nor give to others, any ſubſtantial proof of our converſion to CHRIST, unleſs we act in ſuch a manner, as correſponds with a good conſcience. But we cannot pretend to this, in the *allowed* neglect of Baptiſm, or any other known duty.

7. JESUS CHRIST hath given it as the characteriſtic of his friends, that they do whatſoever He command them. John xv. 14.

8. THE Baptiſts alſo eſteem obedience to this rite, as the Goſpel way in which a viſible and ſolemn profeſſion of the Chriſtian religion is made, or entered upon, being the firſt external ordinance to which obedience is required of penitent believers; thereby manifeſting their ſubjection to CHRIST, as Lord or head of the Chriſtian diſpenſation. And being thus entered, are *externally* qualified for, and under obligation to obey the other injunctions of a ritual nature, according to the order [reſpecting the manner of performing and when,] as ſtated in the New Teſtament, or may be learned from the practice of the Apoſtles, in planting, and eſtabliſhing the firſt Chriſtian Churches. The converts being baptiſed, are to obſerve all things whatſoever their Lord and Maſter commanded his miniſters to teach them. Mat. xxviii. 20.

AND that thoſe, who obey from the heart, this precept of the Goſpel, (be baptized) are prepared to enjoy what is graciouſly promiſed of God, in CHRIST JESUS, to ſuch as are thus obedient.

THUS

THUS it may appear, that though Baptiſm is not (in the eſteem of the Baptiſts) of that importance which many have aſſerted, both in the eſtabliſhed Church, and among Pedobaptiſt diſſenters, yet do they regard it as far too important to be neglected by any, who would evidence themſelves the diſciples or ſervants of the Son of God.

"WE the Baptiſts are not conſcious of attributing "any degree of importance to Baptiſm, which our Pe- "dobaptiſt diſſenting brethren do not allow, and for "which they do not plead. Do we conſider it as a "divine appointment, as an inſtitution of CHRIST, "the adminiſtration and uſe of which is to continue to "the end of the world? So do they. Do they con- "ſider it as an ordinance, which when once rightly ad- "miniſtered to a proper ſubject, is never to be repeat- "ed? So do we. Do we look upon it as indiſpenſi- "bly neceſſary to communion at the LORD's Table? "So do they. Do we actually refuſe communion to ſuch "whom we conſider as unbaptized? So do they*, No "man, I preſume, if conſidered by them as not bap- "tized, would be admitted to break bread at the LORD's "Table in any of their Churches, however amiable his "character, or how much ſoever they might eſteem "him in other reſpects.', And then wherein is it, that Pedobaptiſts excel the Baptiſts, in point of Chriſtian Charity?—Doth this amiable grace require, or conſiſt, in the deeming or treating that as right or according to *truth*, while it is firmly believed to be wrong, and without foundation *therein*?—Is it *uncharitable* in any denomination of Chriſtians to think and act as the evidence of things appears to them?

IT

* Remember the Baptiſts and Pedobaptiſts do both act on the ſame principle in requiring that the ſubjects be baptized before admiſſion to the LORD's Supper.

It hath been obſerved, that when Pedobaptiſts are pleading for Infants being the proper ſubjects of Baptiſm, then Baptiſm is repreſented as of vaſt importance, and the not chriſtening them, as expoſing them to loſs or prejudice. But when Pedobaptiſts are oppoſing the Baptiſts, in their pleading for obedience to this Rite, then it is repreſented as a *triſling* affair, not worth contending about, under the idea of a ſomething merely external, as a thing, of little moment &c. Is not this an evident and ſtrange inconſiſtancy?

If Baptiſm be of ſuch great importance, even to Infants (in the eſteem of Pedobaptiſts) as it ſhould ſeem from what hath been cited, and their hurry, if their Infants are ſick, ought they not on this principle to grant it is of great importance to penitent Believers, who with knowledge and in faith, *rationally*, *perſonally* obey the command, and who only are capable of *ſuch* obedience?

Attend to the gracious declaration and promiſe of the Chriſtian Legiſlator.——He that believeth and is baptized ſhall be ſaved. Mark xvi. 16.——Saved from the guilt of *paſt* ſin, and accepted with God, and *remaining ſteadfaſt*, be ſaved with an everlaſting Salvation, inherit eternal Life, as the *gift* of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

That all who are favour'd with the good news and glad tidings of the Goſpel, may ſee the truth and become willing ſubjects of the Redeemer's Kingdom of Grace here, and finally enjoy that Crown of Glory that fadeth not away, is the earneſt prayer of the Author. *Amen.*

May, 6th, 1791.

FINIS.

ERRATA.

Page 8. *l.* 18. from the top, for *entiled*, read *entitled*.